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Ulster Unionist Council

The Labour Party and
Ireland

Belfast

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THE LABOUR PARTY
AND IRELAND.



The Deputation's Report.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM.



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THE LABOUR PARTY AND IRELAND.

THE DEPUTATION'S REPORT.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM.

THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY recently sent a deputation to Ireland, ostensibly "to obtain the fullest information regarding the present methods of the British Government in Ireland, and to ascertain the opinions of representative Irishmen on the question of the Government of Ireland." Such a declaration presupposes open minds. The entire of the Labour Party, however, as Mr. Henderson admitted in December last in the House of Commons, were elected as Home Rulers. In 1918 the Party, at its annual conference, passed a resolution in favour of Home Rule. In 1919 the British Labour delegation to Berne declared "the Labour Party has always supported Home Rule." In the month of December, 1919, it was officially announced that the Labour and Nationalist Parties had entered into an alliance by which the Labour Party was pledged to the Irish Nationalist policy in return for the Irish vote in British constituencies for Labour candidates. Two Bills were recently submitted to Parliament; one of these had for its purpose the securing of a living wage for the Irish Police Force, the other contained similar provision for Irish teachers, and also proposed to put Irish education under popular control, as in England and Scotland. The Labour Party, though pledged to the principle of a living wage, and to popular control of education, joined the Irish Nationalist Party in the attempt to defeat the Irish Police Bill, and aided unitedly in the obstruction which prevented the Irish Education Bill from securing a Second Reading.

The visit of the Labour deputation to Ireland as a body of independent and unprejudiced inquirers was a farce. They came not to seek truth. They had found their verdict long before the mission of inquiry began. It was lynch law in politics—hanging first and inquest afterwards.

The deputation spent eleven days in Ireland, of which 32 hours were devoted to Ulster, and it went back satisfied that it had explored the whole Irish situation, and found a perfect solution, all in eleven days, though the solution has eluded three generations of British statesmen. Is it any wonder that their report has been received with universal derision? It is in Nationalist Labour circles that contempt has been most vehemently expressed. "The Watchword of Labour" represents the views of the Irish Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress in the three provinces outside Ulster. It denounced the report as "a miserable failure," as "sickenening cant," and the party itself as a "tragic failure" and "hugging a delusion." It tells the Labour Party that the scheme of Dominion Home Rule put forward could not secure "two hundred supporters" (the Irish Dominion League membership, in fact, is considerably less than that figure), and that a Republic alone will satisfy Nationalist Ireland.

MURDER OF POLICE AND "REPRESSION."

Throughout the Labour Party's visit policemen were murdered, or murderously assailed, at the rate of one per day. Some of the murders were committed under circumstances of such exceptional ferocity as to excite universal horror. Not one word of commiseration was uttered for the hapless widows and orphans bereaved by cowardly assassins. Upon the contrary, the

deputation fastened upon an isolated incident in the town of Thurles to issue an interim report, which they described, in shameful disregard of truth, as a "striking evidence of what was going on in various parts of Ireland," and as "a deplorable result of Castle Rule." No statement could have been more flagrantly untrue. It had nothing to do with "Castle Rule," and no similar incident had happened, or has since happened. The fact that the police, according to local allegation, in a moment of terrible exasperation, forgot discipline and smashed some fifty windows, was set out in the most lurid way, but there was not a word of reference to the dreadful provocation which preceded it. "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" was deliberately flouted by these self-appointed witnesses. For many months the police had been treated as social lepers; murder dogged their footsteps day and night, and every man carried his life in his hands. In broad daylight, on the main street of Thurles, District-Inspector Hunt was shot down as he stood at the street corner. Half a hundred people were upon the street, not one of whom came forward to offer any evidence as to the assailant. At the inquest it was proved that certain of those who gathered around the dying man, and watched his last agonising convulsions, laughed in abandoned brutality. Constable Finnegan was murdered on his own doorstep, and fell dying into the arms of his wife, only a few hours before the arrival of the Labour Party. Two days previously two police barracks near the town were attacked by storming parties, and subjected for hours to a murderous fire. Over twenty police or military had been murdered in the Southern provinces before the Labour Party's visit; one hundred others had been fired upon, nearly all of them being wounded, and most of them seriously so. No less than 1,600 outrages of greater or lesser degree had been committed up to that date, but not one person had been made amenable for any of the murders or serious outrages; not one. No mention whatever was made of any of these things in the Labour Party's report. Candour was abandoned, and truth subordinated to expediency. Wrong though the action of the police was in smashing windows at Thurles, is it to be wondered at that the splendid discipline and restraint so long maintained broke down momentarily under a strain that culminated in the assassination of an unarmed comrade? There was no word of sympathy for murdered and maimed police, but Mr. Adamson filled the air with lamentations for broken windows.

The Labour Report goes on to declare "no evidence was forthcoming to prove that the shooting of policemen preceded the application of the policy of rigorous repression." Where did the Party seek for evidence? Did they expect Sinn Féin to furnish evidence against itself? Why was no application made to the police for evidence? It was their ranks that were being decimated by the assassin. They could have given overwhelming evidence. They were justly entitled to a hearing before a foul charge of being agents provocateurs of crime was declared by inference to have been established against them. Have they had even the semblance of a trial at the hands of this Labour jury?

WHAT CAUSED THE REBELLION.

It is not merely the police evidence that has been ignored in this vital matter. A Royal Commission—the Rebellion Commission—investigated this identical question shortly after the Irish Rebellion of 1916, in which over 30 Sherwood Foresters were ambushed and shot dead in the streets of Dublin, as well as policemen. The Labour Party is perfectly familiar with the findings of that Royal Commission. The Report states:—

The enforcement of law and the preservation of order should always be independent of political expediency. It appears to us that reluctance was shown by the Irish Government to repress by prosecution written and spoken seditious utterances, and to suppress the drilling and manœuvring of armed forces known to be under the control of men who were openly declaring their hostility to your Majesty's Government, and their readiness to welcome and assist your Majesty's enemies. This reluctance was largely prompted by the pressure brought to bear by the Parliamentary representatives of the Irish people, and in Ireland itself there developed a widespread belief that no repressive measures would be undertaken by the Government against sedition. This led to a rapid increase of preparations for insurrection, and was the immediate cause of the recent outbreak.

The declaration of the Labour Party is thus clearly established to be untrue.

The statement that there is "no evidence that the shooting of policemen preceded repression, is, to use an historic phrase, a 'frigid and calculated falsehood.' The need for repression was urged amongst others by the 'Daily Chronicle,' which in 1918 wrote:—

Any measure taken by the Irish Executive which is calculated to bring to an end the intimidation under which thousands of Irishmen are now living needs no other justification, and if the revival of trial by special jury and change of venue do that, they will not be resented by any responsible party in this country.

The "Times" at the same period wrote:—

The present state of the country is really serious. Large areas are dominated by Sinn Féin, and in such areas public opinion is so thoroughly intimidated that the administration of the law by local courts has become a farce.

When the Liberal Party took over the Government of Ireland in 1906, the new Chief Secretary (Mr. Bryce) publicly declared:—"Ireland has not been so peaceful and free from crime for 200 years. From then until 1912 according to Parliamentary Paper (H. of C. 129) there had been 807 shooting and bomb outrages, resulting in 31 people being killed and 196 wounded. Over 2,400 agrarian outrages were committed in the same period, and 366 persons were boycotted, and under police protection. The Lord Chief Justice at Clare Assizes in March, 1912, declared:—"There is grievous intimidation and reluctance to assist the authorities because of intimidation." At Leitrim Assizes a little earlier, the presiding Judge said:—"The chain of terrorism is complete, no witness will give evidence, and no jury will convict." Judge Curran, addressing the Grand Jury, said:—"Experience has proved that boycotting has invariably led to serious crime and outrage, and even murder. Let us hope that even at the eleventh hour the authorities will step in and extend to these persecuted people not mercy, but common justice, and the protection to which they are entitled."

Year by year the ghastly record mounted up under the Liberal Government, and as the Rebellion Commission has pointed out, the arm of the law was paralyzed by Nationalist interference. This the Labour Party has stigmatized as the "calculated provocation" of Dublin Castle. Then came the Rebellion, with assassination of police and soldiers. Yet the Labour Party egregiously declares "no evidence was forthcoming to prove that the shooting of policemen preceded the policy of repression." The very reverse is the most conspicuous and indisputable fact in modern Irish history. That the Labour Deputation should have penned such a paragraph shows them to be purblind and biased, lacking alike in a sense of justice and of the most commonplace power of perception.

MORE FALSEHOODS.

"The High Court Bench is mainly Unionist," says the Labour Report. "Political bias tinges the charges to Grand Juries and political feeling often determines judgment." To-day all the Irish Judges condemn Southern "sedition." What are the facts? The Lord Chief Justice, the Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Ronan, and Lord Justice O'Connor—four of the five judges who sit in the Court of Appeal—are Roman Catholics. To say they now exhibit Unionist "bias" and Unionist "political feeling in their judgments" is a suggestion so outrageous that it refutes itself. To make such a charge, and leave it unsupported by a shred of proof, is in the last degree discreditable. The glaring mendacity exhibited in this astounding charge is characteristic of the ignorance and error which disfigure and vitiate the whole Report. Surely, it was in irony that the Party wrote, "We desire to avoid sweeping generalisations."

LABOUR PARTY AND ULSTER LABOUR.

Having dealt with His Majesty's Judges in this fashion, the Report proceeds to animadversion concerning the Ulster Labour Unionist Association. It says:—"In the North Labour is influenced far too much by religious animosities to take an unprejudiced view of the situation." The very next sentence reads:—"In Trade Union branches Home Rule discussions are taboo." Whatever else that sentence may prove, it certainly does not prove the other

assertion. Nine days were devoted to investigations in the South; the Ulster Unionist Labour deputation was favoured with a thirty minutes' interview, the greater part of it being marked by studied discourtesy of attitude and speech, and sneers at Sir Edward Carson. On April 29, 1914, the most remarkable Labour demonstration ever seen in Ireland was held in the Ulster Hall, Belfast. It consisted of officials and members of every great trade organization in the city and district. It was a purely spontaneous demonstration, originating with the workers and conducted solely by them. It set on appeal to the Trade Unionists of Great Britain, pointing out that to set up a separate Parliament for Ireland meant that two Parliaments would be making laws governing wages and conditions for the same trades in the United Kingdom, that this would be disastrous for the solidarity of Labour; that the Irish worker was secure now only because one Parliament, in which Labour was a powerful voice, made the laws for all workers in the Three Kingdoms; that the privileges thus won were in grave danger; and that the hundreds of thousands of pounds paid into the great parent Trade Unions must be jeopardised if Irish Labour separated itself and was made subject to a Parliament mainly agricultural and reactionary. Every single member of the Labour Party, as then constituted, including Mr. Henderson, Mr. Adamson, and Mr. Tyson Wilson, was individually invited to attend the demonstration and hear Ulster Labour state its case against Home Rule. Not one of them had the courage to attend and argue the question, or the courtesy to acknowledge the invitation. That is how the Labour "bosses" treat the rank and file when the latter choose to do their own thinking and consult their own interests. The Belfast workers later on sent a deputation to the House of Commons and after repeated and persistent efforts were granted a perfunctory interview, which, like the recent Belfast interview, was a sustained piece of insolence. The Labour Party, in short, did not want to see people whose views conflicted with their schemes, or who were likely to give them trouble. The studied offensiveness of the portion of the Report dealing with this deputation speaks for itself. It says:—

"From Trade Unionist members of the Ulster Unionist Labour Association no helpful suggestions were forthcoming. This Association claims to be the most representative political body in the North. None of its members directly represent their Trade Unions, and the fact that Sir Edward Carson is its President, and employers are associated with it, discounts its claim to be a bona-fide Labour organization. That it echoes the political opinion of a substantial number of working people in Belfast, the Labour delegation is not prepared to deny," etc.

Having villified His Majesty's Judges, the delegation suddenly became scrupulous, and were not prepared to deny the undeniable.

Because Ulster workers would not put forward suggestions for their own undoing, and help the Labour Party in its betrayal of Irish Trade Union interests in order to secure Nationalist votes, they are told that "their lack of representative authority did not give weight to its views." They are the only organized workers in Ireland who have representatives in Parliament; three of their members having been returned directly on the Labour ticket, an event that has no parallel in the history of Irish Nationalism. They are Unionist in politics because separation from Great Britain involves disaster for them as Trade Unionists. The Labour deputation is driven to desperate argumentative extremities when it objects to Sir Edward Carson as honorary President of this organization. Mr. Hammerde, a leading English K.C., has been selected as the official Labour candidate for Grewe; barristers, a retired colonel, a countless, college dons, schoolmasters, ex-Civil servants, and other such "horny-handed sons of toil" have been welcomed with open arms. They are out now with a special appeal to the "black-coated" workers of all classes. If Sir Edward Carson were to offer to go over to the Labour Party to-morrow he would be welcomed with riotous enthusiasm. Is not Sir Edward Carson "a black-coated worker?" Does he not work as hard in the House and out of it as either Mr. Henderson or Mr. Adamson? If lawyers like Mr. Hammerde, K.C., are officially received into the Labour Party itself, where is the consistency in complaining that Sir Edward has been elected hon. President of an organization composed exclusively of active Trade Unionists? If it be true that his being President "discounts its claims to be a bona-fide Labour organization," are not the bona-fides of the Labour Party still more discounted in its hybrid personnel?

Who are the more likely to understand the real attitude of Sinn Féin towards Labour—a party of "Cook's tourists" on an eleven-day tour, or workers whose entire lives have been spent in the country, and whose all is at stake? Sinn Féin makes no secret of the sort of Labour movement which it contemplates, and which it intends to produce if given the control of an Irish Parliament. In an official pamphlet, "Sinn Féin and the Labour Movement," (p. 19) there occurs the following passage, over which the British Labour Party would do well to ponder before they complete the betrayal of Irish Labour:—

The Labour Movement must accept the paramount fact of the Irish Nation. It must make itself an Irish movement, first, last, and all along the line. It must realize that the Irish nation is at war with the English nation, and Irish Trades Unionists ought to get control of their own funds and conduct their own policy. They ought to trust not to the British democracy, but to substitute for amalgamation with English Unions a confederation of all Irish Labour."

When that statement is put into conjunction with the declaration of a leading Irish priest—"the time has come to form a Catholic Trade Union."—what a comment the two constitute upon the Labour Party's Report!

"ROBBING IRELAND."

The further the Labour Party's Report is examined the more amazing does the litany of falsehood which it contains become. They appear to have swallowed as Gospel all that Sinn Féin chose to state without a word of inquiry elsewhere. The more outrageous the misstatement the more eagerly was it accepted. Off their own bat they state "there is an economic case against the Union," and then go on to dish up the following:—

According to Sinn Féin the Union lays upon Ireland far too heavy a financial burden. They say over-taxation is proved and point out that in 1894 the British Government appointed a Financial Relations Commission which unanimously reported in 1896 that Ireland has been overtaxed from the year 1800 by two and three-quarter millions a year. They maintain that in the last hundred years Irish taxation has been increased eleven-fold, whereas English taxation has been in the same period increased only five-fold.

Why the Labour Party did not examine the Report of the Financial Relations Commission for themselves and test the accuracy of these statements, only the Labour Party can explain. So far from having reported unanimously the Childers Commission sent in seven separate reports. A decennial table of taxation in the two countries per head of population clears up the seeming mystery. In 1819 the taxation per head in Great Britain was £3 10s 3d, while in Ireland it was only 14/5. In 1903 the figures similarly were Great Britain £3 1s 11d, Ireland £1 19s 1d. From the White Paper of Revenue and Expenditure 1910 the following facts emerge. Ireland contributed £37,275,000, equal to 4.51 of the total or £8 10s 8d per head; Scotland £97,321,500 equal to 11.79 of the total or £20 0s 10d per head; England and Wales £391,062,000 equal to 83.70 of the total or £19 2s 1d per head, of the total local expenditure of £185,536,500. England and Wales were responsible for £143,847,500 or 77.53 per cent. Of the total contribution for Imperial purposes of £640,122,000 England provided 85.49 per cent., Scotland 12.15 per cent., and Ireland only 2.36 per cent. In other words Ireland's contribution to Imperial purposes was £9 8s 11d per head, Scotland's £16 7s 0d, and England's £15 3s 4d. These are facts that ought to be within the knowledge of every member of Parliament since they are available to all. The Labour Delegation was either in complete ignorance of them, or it deliberately ignored them. Either way it is hopelessly discredited as a faithworthy witness.

The Report of the Finance Relations Commission has been referred to as confirming the theory of the alleged over-taxation of Ireland in the past. Here again the chronic inaccuracy of the deputation and its readiness to swallow every cock and bull story that suited its purpose is evident. Sir David Barbour and Sir Thomas Sutherland, the two financial experts of the Commission, completely annihilate the theory in their Minority report. The present Chan-

cellor of the Exchequer in a well-known work on the same subject agrees with these two great authorities. No answer has ever been attempted to these exposures.

The theory of Ireland's over-taxation was never heard of until 1886, when Sir Robert Giffen invented it in order to give Mr. Gladstone a pretext for certain proposals of the Home Rule Bill of that year. The contention was upon the spot challenged by Professor Brugham Leech, and so completely rebutted that Sir Robert Giffen never attempted a reply to the exposure. The Childers Committee later revived the theory and attempted to justify it by treating Ireland as a separate entity, which it was not, and also by resting upon the vague and entirely undefined and undefinable doctrine of taxable capacity.

THE OTHER SIDE.

When the Act of Union became law, in 1800, the National Debt of Ireland was £26,850,246, or 13 times greater than it had been in 1782, when Ireland wrung independence from England. Ireland enjoyed a separate exchequer until 1817 and her Debt expanded between 1800 and 1816 to the extent of a further £113,709,358 thus raising the total debt to £140,559,604 which was taken over at the amalgamation of the two Exchequers, and made part of the Consolidated Debt of the United Kingdom. From 1817 to 1817 Ireland was thus steadily being engulfed in debt. It has been alleged that the financial arrangement of 1800, which provided that Ireland should contribute, as her proportion, two-seventenths to the Imperial Revenue, was unfair. Even if that contention be true, it does not establish that Ireland suffered, since there is all the difference in the world between assessment of a tax and payment of it. Ireland paid her two-seventenths not by taxing the people, but by borrowing both principal and interest, and it became part of the debt taken over in 1817, of which to the present hour she has never paid a sixpence. When the Exchequers were consolidated in 1817 it was then arranged that Ireland should no longer contribute a fixed sum, but so much as remained over after paying the actual cost of administration, and no fairer arrangement was possible.

It has been shown by Professor Leech that in 95 years, between 1817 and 1912, a modest estimate of Ireland's due contribution to Imperial Revenue should have been at least £5,000,000 per annum, or a total of £475,000,000, whereas the balances actually paid in did not exceed £310,000,000, leaving Ireland a debtor to Great Britain to the extent of £165,000,000 instead of being a creditor for any sum. Between 1801 and 1816, Great Britain raised £265,000,000 by special war taxes from which Ireland was exempted, and in the next four years a further £107,000,000 was raised, similarly to which Ireland contributed nothing. It was not until 1853 that Ireland began to pay income tax, but it had been imposed upon Great Britain half a century before. It was not until 1858 that the extraordinary preference enjoyed by Ireland in the matter of a much lower duty rate on spirits was ended by the equalisation of these charges. In England and Scotland the cost of public education is largely borne by local rates. There is no education rate in Ireland. The cost of police falls mainly on local rates in Great Britain, whereas in Ireland, like education, it is a charge upon Imperial resources. The cost of old-age pensions in Ireland is £2,453,000 per annum. In Scotland, which has a larger population, it is only £1,219,000. Over £100,000,000 have been provided by the Imperial Parliament to make an end of the Irish land system and the grants in aid of local taxation represent a large sum annually.

The Labour Party which has set out to instruct mankind upon the Irish question apparently has never heard of the facts and figures quoted above from official documents though they are amongst the commonplaces to those who know. They simply opened their mouths, shut their eyes and swallowed the polemical stuff which Sinn Féin offered them.

"ECONOMIC ARREST."

Equally fatuous and untrue is the statement that "Ireland is in a state of economic arrest." The reports of the various Banking concerns, issued a few weeks ago, annihilate the statement. The Bank of Ireland paid a dividend of 12 per cent. less income Tax. Its deposits and accounts expanded during the year by £4,726,000. Its "advances to customers principally for agricultural

and trade developments" were £3,460,000. The Munster and Leinster Bank paid a dividend of 20 per cent. less income Tax. Every one of the banks in the North of Ireland beat all previous records. These are the facts, and no ingenuity in falsehoodmongering can reconcile them with the Labour Party's statement. The returns of Trade in the leading industries are trumpet-tongued as to the progress of Ireland in every direction, despite persistence in the Nationalist policy of "making the Government of Ireland by England impossible." The figures during the war period are amazing, but they are to a degree explained by the inflation in prices. The volume, however, shows a great expansion. The period between 1904 and 1914 are, however, conclusive. The official figures show that in 1904 the value of eggs exported was £2,188,104 and in 1914 £3,383,870; the amount of stout exported rose from £1,646,582 to £2,446,664. The value of cattle exported in 1904 was £8,985,302 and in 1914 it was £14,173,000. Linen exports soared up from £5,597,983 to £15,833,456, and the value of ships turned out rose 400 per cent. namely, from £1,500,000 to £8,703,250, while the value of butter, which in 1904 stood at £3,195,015, was in 1914, £4,641,673. How can the Labour party square these indisputable figures with the statement that "Ireland is in a state of economic arrest"? They might as well have declared that the sun has ceased to shine in Ireland.

Rev. Father McDonald, of Maynooth Roman Catholic College, though a Home Ruler, says in his recent striking book, pages 213/14:—

It was not the Union that caused either emigration or immigration; but the development of steam power, with the opening up of so much new territory. Had we in Ireland been our own masters, we should have had to face the same problem caused by the loss of our market for grain.

Belfast flourished mightily under the Union without any special favour that I can discover. It grew like any of the great towns of England and by the operation of the same causes—application of the new energy of coal through the newest and best machinery. The same holds good of the other towns of Ulster where factories rose and prospered. In the rest of Ireland it was different, or where it was not different there, too, was success. In Kilkenny there had been considerable manufacture of woollens, starch, and leather, but they continued to use old world machines and methods, and were beaten in competition.

The woollen mills depended wholly on the water force of the Nore which in the dry season is little more than a trickle for weeks. Ten miles away at Castlecomer they had some of the finest steam coal in the world, but they lacked the brains or the spirit to turn it to account.

So of the flour mills, the ruin of which is so often ascribed to the Union, while the true source of rot is found elsewhere.

When anyone tells me that the Union is responsible for the non-development, and even the decay of Irish Industries, I ask him to tell me what law was passed by the Imperial Parliament to keep the Suir from being as great a centre of industry as the Lagan, and I never hear of any.

The fact is I fear that we Gaels have not the business turn of mind, and so do not build factories even now anywhere; on the banks of the Hudson or Mississippi any more than the Suir or the Liffey. We never build them—never were a commercial people.

Why didn't the Labour Party go to Maynooth, see Father McDonald, and explain to him that he was all wrong, and didn't know his Ireland? Their eleven-day omniscience might have been able to instruct his sixty years' experience.

LABOUR TESTIMONY.

James Connolly, the well known Irish Labour Leader, who was executed for participation in the 1916 Rebellion, was Larkin's chief lieutenant, and generally regarded as the brains carrier

of the Irish Labour Party. He was a man of considerable education and erudition, and a rank Republican, but he had to face the facts of history. In his book "Labour in Ireland" (p. 21) he says:

Modern Irish politicians, inspired either by a blissful unconsciousness of the facts of history, or else sublimely indifferent to its teaching, are in the habit of tracing the misery of Ireland to the Legislative Union as its source, but the slightest possible acquaintance with Ante-Union literature will reveal a record of famine, oppression, and injustice due to economic causes unsurpassed at any other stage of modern Irish history.

In pages 45 et. sq. he elaborates the argument as follows:—

The fact that the Union placed all Irish manufactures upon an absolutely equal basis legally with the manufactures of England is usually ignored, or worse still is so perverted in its statement as to leave the impression that the reverse is the case. In fact, many thousands of our countrymen still believe that English laws prohibit mining in Ireland after certain minerals and the manufacture of certain articles. An English Capitalist will cheerfully invest his money in Timbuctoo or China, or anywhere that he thinks he can secure a profit, even though it may be in the territory of his mortal enemy. It would be foolish to expect that he would allow his Parliament to make laws prohibiting him from opening mines or factories in Ireland to make a profit. There are not, and have not been since the Union, any such laws.

He goes on to urge anyone who wishes to get at the truth to single out the most prominent of the Nationalist Parliamentarians, and propound the following question:—

"Explain the process by which the removal of Parliament from Dublin to London—a removal absolutely unaccompanied by any legislative interference with Irish industry—prevented the Irish capitalist class from continuing to produce goods for the Irish market."

He will get no logical answer to his question—no answer that any reputable thinker on economic questions would accept for one moment.

One would have imagined that a British Labour Party going to Ireland upon such a mission of inquiry would have taken the trouble to read the only work that has been written by one of their own class upon "Labour in Ireland." They either did nothing of the kind, or they closed their minds against it because the indisputable and historic facts quoted above would have completely quered the case they came pledged to make. To speak of their mission as a genuine quest for truth would be a travesty of language.

The report of the Labour Deputation exhibits quite misplaced and grossly partisan sympathy for certain occurrences, and it seeks to inspire similar misplaced feelings upon the part of the British people. It speaks of raids on private dwellings; of fairs and markets as being prohibited, of Trade Union Meetings and national games and pastimes as being forbidden, of musical festivals and debating societies "of the most harmless character" as being regarded as conspiracies; of a Sinn Féin Commission "to investigate the future development of Irish industry" as prohibited, and its members as having been ejected from the City Hall at Cork, and the Gaelic League is presented as a body of amiable and harmless gentlemen combined for the purpose of "promoting the Irish language, Irish dress, Irish habits of thought and so on." It does admit that the League has been captured by Sinn Féiners, and it does admit also that wild speeches have been made at its meetings. That such wild speeches have been the direct cause of murder and widespread crime and terrorism is apparently too trivial for any notice. The Labour Party in sublime innocence goes on to explain these phenomena as follows:—

"The Labour delegation failed to elicit any popular explanation of the action of the authorities, except the suggestion that they desired to inflict injury upon Irish trade."

The Deputation was apparently fully satisfied with this grotesque suggestion. They never sought a word of explanation from the authorities, who could have cleared up the whole business in a dozen sentences. The fact that none of these things have happened in Ulster, nor in any county in the rest of Ireland where the campaign of assassination of police and the plunder of the civilian population is absent, had no meaning for the Deputation. It was a "popular" explanation they were after, not the truth.

Raids on private dwellings only take place where the police have reason to suspect the illicit possession of arms or explosives, or the secretion of "wanted" persons or such other lawful reason as in the view of the authorities may justify such action. Alleged Labour meetings in some areas have been again and again used as a cloak for criminal conspiracies. Liberty Hall, Dublin, which has been frequently raided, was the headquarters of the Irish Rebellion. Legitimate Trade Union meetings are held by the score every week without the least interference outside the areas which are overrun by crime, and against legitimate Trade Unionism there has been no hostile action whatever and no complaint from it. The Sinn Féin Commission alluded to was set up under the aegis of the spurious and hostile Sinn Féin Parliament. Government could no more tolerate such masquerading in the name of an unlawful, a hostile and anti-British Parliament than it could tolerate the challenge to and flouting of its authority which the Sinn Féin Parliament itself would imply. Suppose a hostile Sinn Féin Labour Party set itself in opposition to, and denied the right of the British Trade Congress to speak for British Labour, and usurped its functions, what action would the Labour Party adopt towards it?

Fairs and such like gatherings were being utilized as a means of doing under cover of these concourses what had been expressly prohibited in the interests of the preservation of the public safety. As they could not be confined to their legitimate purpose, they had to be prevented until the lesson of respect for the law had been learned. The Government had to choose between taking steps essential to the protection of law-abiding people, or abandoning the attempt entirely and surrendering the country to the desperadoes who are seeking to overturn all authority. Areas simply had to be isolated in order to recover control of them. Precisely the same thing would have happened, and has happened, in periods of turbulence in Great Britain. The Gaelic Athletic Association corresponds in the realm of sport to the Gaelic League, and like it, is imbued with a malignant anti-British spirit. No sailor or soldier or policeman is permitted to take part in any sports meetings held under its rules. To compete with them at meetings held under the laws of the Amateur Athletic Association involves permanent disqualification. All "West British" games, like Association and Rugby football, cricket, etc., are completely barred, and the wearers of the King's uniform is treated as a social leper.

To sum up the whole position the Report of the Labour Party is a reproach to the name of British justice, British common-sense, and British veracity. It would be taking a very charitable view of it to say that it has been produced by a band of simpletons, whose credulity has been scandalously imposed upon. The fact is the Labour Party was fatally committed long before the Deputation went to Ireland. To save its face it had to shut its eyes to facts, which, if fairly considered and duly presented, would have compelled a breach of the alliance with the Irish Nationalist Party, and a confession that they have been consciously, or unconsciously, fooled.

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